

Hello – and welcome to the new Girl Scout Leadership Experience, an update for returning leaders.

This has been an exciting year for Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines, and with the introduction of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, things will continue to be exciting – for our girls and for you, our valued volunteers.

Because we value your time and experience, we created this blended learning opportunity for you. We will take you through the transitions and get you started on your “Journey.”

As you know, GSUSA initiated a comprehensive review of our movement to determine our direction for the future. The review led to some “brutal truths” that Girl Scouting as an organization had to face if we were to stay a viable and relevant organization in today’s world. Some of those changes included the realignment of councils to ensure high performance in serving girls, creating a new program model for girls that is meaningful to them, and looking at new ways to work with volunteers, the backbone of our organization, so their experience is consistent and flexible. Another change is in shifting the concept of “training” to a much broader focus on “learning” and how the organization can support a learning culture where Girl Scout adults have options and opportunities for continuous development. In the past “trainers” and “training programs” were designed to support girls in troops and mothers as leaders.

In today’s global economy, this system no longer works. Girls and adults have many more options vying for their time. We need to provide them with more options to participate so we become the organization in which they choose to place their time and energies.

To accommodate the needs of volunteers, we have created a learning support system composed of a team of adult learning facilitators providing opportunities based on the facilitator’s strengths and passions. We have Leadership Essentials facilitators – volunteers who will assist leaders in providing the Girl Scout Journeys to our girls – enrichment facilitators – adults with a special focus or talent to share with leaders to enhance the opportunities they provide for girls, mentors, e-facilitators, and outdoor skills providers.

GSUSA has created an on-line “Orientation” to Girl Scouting. New leaders will find a link on our Web site and can access this opportunity at their convenience. For those volunteers who prefer to do their learning in a way other than on-line, each Membership Director has been provided with a DVD of this session that volunteers can view at home on their TVs.

Leadership Essentials is **the** workshop for new leaders, three hours long, that provides volunteers with what they **need to know** to facilitate the Girl Scout journeys. This workshop replaces the former leader basics and age level trainings.

This year, Leadership Essentials is a face to face opportunity but will also be available on-line next year. The beauty of these consistent learning options, is that each leader across the country will receive the same information regardless of council affiliation.

As you see from the workbook, Leadership Essentials focuses only on providing adults with the information they “**need to know**” to assist girls on their journeys.

To provide the “nice to know” information such as ceremonies, songs, games, etc. we are creating enrichment opportunities in which leaders can choose to participate. If you have suggestions for topics or facilitators to provide enrichment, please contact the Volunteer Services Department.

As in any change in focus, returning leaders need to know the new terminology. One such change is a shift from age level participation to grade level participation. The research supports this change to better meet the needs of girls. In the past, a Girl Scout Brownie could be in grades 1, 2, or 3 or ages 5, 6, or 7. But think about the huge developmental differences between 5, 6, and 7 year olds. Many first graders can read; many more cannot. How frustrating trying to provide the same quality program experience when the girls developmental abilities are so varied. The shift to grade level produces materials appropriate for girls in a particular grade.

The new grade levels are:

- Girl Scout Daisies – grades K and 1
- Girl Scout Brownies – grades 2 and 3
- Girl Scout Juniors – grades 4 and 5
- Girl Scout Cadettes – grades 6, 7, and 8
- Girl Scout Seniors – grades 9 and 10
- Girl Scout Ambassadors – grades 11 and 12

Other terminology changes that support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience include:

- 3 Keys to Leadership – Discover, Connect, and Take Action. Replaces the 4 Program Goals
- 3 Girl Processes – Girl led, learn by doing and Cooperative learning. Replaces the term Girl/Adult partnership.
- As noted in the grade levels, Girl Scout comes before the grade level, i.e. Girl Scout Brownies rather than Brownie Girl Scout. This reinforces the fact that all members of the movement are Girl Scouts – regardless of grade or age.

Let’s now take a closer look at the Girl Scout Leadership model. Page 5 in your workbook illustrates the Girl Scout Leadership Experience – the “engine” for everything girls do to achieve our Girl Scout Mission – “...building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.”

Our mission, as you can see, is termed the “long-term outcome” of our program. Outcomes are the result of a meaningful experience. By defining our long term outcome, we can show the world the benefit of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls.

To achieve this long term outcome, you can see that there are “intermediate” outcomes and “short-term” outcomes. Measurement tools for the outcomes are being piloted in several councils around the country this program year. We anticipate seeing these tools in Spring 2009.

In the meantime, you can look for signs or indicators – changes in the girls’ behavior, actions, attitudes – that show the program is achieving it’s goals. Page 19 in the workbook provides some examples of signs or indicators to show achievement of an outcome. But remember, these are just some examples; you will probably find many more. Please share your insights and success stories with the Volunteer Services Department.

The indicators or signs are realized as girls participate in activities based on the 3 Keys to Leadership – so they can **Discover** their sense of self and their values, **Connect** with others locally and globally, and **Take Action** to make the world a better place.

What do the 3 Processes mean? **Girl-led**, as it says, means that girls play an active part in figuring out the what, where, when, how and why of their activities. They lead the planning and decision-making as much as possible. **Learning By Doing** suggests that girls participate in hands-on learning that engages them in cycles of action and reflection so they can connect their experiences to their lives. **Cooperative Learning** means that girls work together toward a shared goal in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration – sharing skills, knowledge and learning. For additional new terms and definitions, turn to page 23 in your workbook.

So how do you – the leader – help girls achieve the Girl Scout Mission through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience? First, let's explore your own leadership journey. Turn to page 8-9 in the workbook and do this exercise. On page 9, sketch out 4-5 defining moments in your life that helped make you the leader we need in Girl Scouting today. For each one, reflect on how you were feeling and thinking at the time and then highlight ages throughout. Think about how these experiences shaped your values, principles, and leadership point of view.

What does Purposeful Leadership mean to you? It could mean being intentional and authentic in your Leadership. Perhaps it helps you to create opportunities for girls to meet the long-term outcome through having them participate in activities guided by the 3 Processes. Purposeful Leadership is what you do to make girls' activities tie into outcomes, rather than just letting them have fun.

Why is this so important in helping girls develop their leadership? First, think about what leadership means to you. It is probably very different from the way girls think about leadership. Turn to page 7 in your workbook and read what leadership means to girls and then what purposeful leadership means and how it helps girls achieve their leadership goals.

Remember, you are a partner with girls, rather than a leader. You will work together with them in deciding the how, what, where, when and why of what they want to do.

You will be hearing a lot of new terms: Journeys, Pathways, and Outcomes. On page 13 of the workbook, you will find definitions for these terms – in short, journeys are what girls do and pathways are how they do them. There are six different pathways available to girls and they may choose to take one or more. In fact, you should encourage girls to take more than one pathway because it will enrich her experience even more. Whatever pathways girls may take, it is up to you to provide Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities that are girl-led, learning-by-doing, and cooperative with intentional outcomes.

Outcomes are described under each of the 3 Keys – see page 17 for the list under each key. This spring, we hope to see the measurement tool developed to help you evaluate whether or not outcomes are met. Outcomes are the basis for fulfilling the Girl Scout Mission. In evaluating whether an outcome is met, you will be looking for signs/indications which are girls' actions, behaviors, attitudes and words they use. As an example of how to evaluate an outcome, see page 19 of the workbook. Know that these are just examples. There may be many different signs and indicators to show an outcome has been met. Share your insights with us.

For the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, new girl books and adult guides are available that take you through the first Journey series. Other Journeys will be rolled out in the coming years, but the launch Journey – It's Your World, Change It – is what you will be using this year. To

help you learn how to use the new books, please answer the questions on the worksheet on page 10 for the adult book and on page 11 for the girl book. There may be more than one place that answers can be found. A good tip is to read both books completely so you will be familiar with how it is organized and planned.

If your troop would like to integrate existing resources into the new program model, that is easily done. Use the checklist on page 12 to help you adapt existing materials to the 3 Keys and the 3 Processes. Remember that everything revolves around intentionally structuring existing program materials into girl-led, learning-by-doing, and cooperative learning activities. You will need to practice purposeful leadership by checking activities to make certain there is a link to at least one of the 3 Keys and that the activity is done according to the 3 Processes. Only then can outcomes be measured and the long-term goal achieved.

What about awards? Badges, patches, and Try-Its continue to exist; they are a part of the Girl Scout tradition. Each Journey has its own recognitions and awards. But the real question is what is the emphasis to be? On getting a cute looking badge, or what the girl learns and experiences in the course of earning it? Read the Juliette Low quote on page 20 of the workbook. That should make clear what her attitude was toward earning recognitions.

Because existing resources are still available until September 30, 2010, girls will be able to earn badges, Try-Its, IPs, etc. Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards will continue as well with new requirements coming out within the next year.

We are in the process of scheduling returning leader roundtables that will be scheduled as part of an area or Service Unit meeting. The updates will also be offered at Leaderee.

We look forward to taking this new journey with you and ensuring that Girl Scouting remains the preeminent organization for girls. If you have questions or comments, please write them down and bring them to your roundtable session. Also feel free to call the Volunteer Service Department at 919-782-3021 or 1-800-284-4475.